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THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

18 APRIL 1980

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Information please

Catherine Onslow, organiser of the last London season of the Italian actress Eleonora Duse in June 1923 under the management of C. B. Cochran; any information about Miss Onslow, who befriended Duse and apparently bought her home in Anglo after her death in 1924; for a book about the last years of the actress.

Giovanni Pontorno, 3 The Grove, Haldenbury, Manchester 20 8RG.

Bevis Bays: any items of information, personal reminiscences or photographs, for a book to be published in 1983, marking the fortieth anniversary of the scheme to relieve the wartime shortage of mine-workers in Britain.

Michael Webster, 194, Northall Gardens, London NW3 5SL.

John Phipps, railwayman, syndicalist, activist at Ormskirk and Liverpool, and workers' union organizer; information about his career after 1921, date of death, and whereabouts of any obituary notice.

David A. Pretty, Plot 3, The Dell, Ton-Ton, Mid-Glamorgan, South Wales.

Joseph Worton (1722-1800): whereabouts of any of his letters, for a PhD thesis.

Hugh Ridd, The Dairy Cottage, Mongewell Park Farm, Wallingford, Oxford OX10 8BS.

Hector Hugh Munro ("Saki"): any letters or other material for a biography.

Dr Christopher Sinclair-Stevenson, 100, Regent's Park, London NW1 3SL.

Sir Richard Fanshawe (1608-1686): whereabouts of manuscript of any of Fanshawe's poems or letters, and information for a life or writings; for an edition of his works, including those of *Lasdona* and *the Pastor* which exist in modern editions.

Peter Davidson, Clare College, Cambridge CB2 3RQ.

The Philosophical Movement (1978): any information, personal or documentary, about its components, organizations, personalities.

Paul R. Smith, Department of Sociology, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT.

ENGLISH HISTORY

For the good of England

By J. P. Kenyon

EDWARD GREGG: Queen Anne
480pp. 20 illustrations. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £17.50.
ISBN 0 7100 0400 1

It was Queen Anne's misfortune to be born at that odious time, the reign of the Stuarts, and it is her voluminous and angry correspondence, supplemented in 1742 by a published narrative, the notorious *Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough*, which has fixed the Queen's character for posterity. "She certainly meant well", wrote

and was not a fool, but nobody can maintain that she was wise. She was ignorant in every-thing but what she persons had taught her when a child, and she never failed in performing exactly the rule given her by them. . . . Being very ignorant, very fearful, with very little judgment, it is easy to be seen she might mean well, being surrounded with so many unkind people, who at last compassed their designs to her dishonour.

Even if Sarah and her husband seemed prominent among these "unfortunate people", this did not invalidate her judgment, and the impression of a weak woman led by the nose was heightened by the demonstration of much of her correspondence with the Marlboroughs.

Given her pronounced physical disabilities and generally poor health, the recessive position she had occupied in the previous reigns, her lack of formal education or training in the exercise of authority, it was a plausible enough impression, and one shared by most contemporaries—initially, at least.

Soon after he arrived in England the Electress Sophia's personal agent, Fulstien, assured Leibnitz that the Queen was a mere cypher, dominated by court favourites. After a few months, however, he had to revise his ideas; he now found her "very opinionated and quite ferocious".

Her posthumous rehabilitation began, rather strangely, with Winston Churchill in 1934: strangely because he was otherwise wonderfully indulgent towards the Marlboroughs. Like almost every-

one else, he overestimated Anne's blind devotion to the Church of England, but he went to the heart of the matter when he said, "As long as she lived she meant to reign". Writing of much the same time (1930), G. M. Trevelyan was inclined to be patronising—"In that part of heroism which consists of endurance, poor dowdy Queen Anne was no less heroic than her ancestors the Primas of Scotland's military genius is all, art, Marlborough's 'betrayal' in 1710 and 1711 is a tragedy engineered by Robert Harley with the backstairs assistance of Abigail Masham.

However, the research of the past twenty years or so has put all this behind us. The first decisive step was taken by J. H. Plummer in 1952, when he showed that in the Cabinet Anne kept a tight grip on decision-making and maintained a stern legal presence. Geoffrey Holmes's sensitive, thoughtful and deeply researched study of the party politics of the age, published in 1967, always has in a completely new light, especially in her relations with her ministers, and David Green's biography of the Duchess of Marlborough, published in the same year, tried to be fair to the Queen as well as to her. In 1969, McCune's study of Harley (1969) complemented Holmes's work, and a series of books and articles by G. V. Bennett on the Church not only showed the Queen to be much less of a devotee than we had supposed, but also gave us many glimpses of her acting in a decidedly un-Anne-like manner. The diary of her personal physician, Sir David Hamilton (discovered in the late 1960s and published in 1975) shed further light on her character—more than it did on her health, in fact.

The only biography to emerge from all this was by David Green, who took a second bite of the cherry in 1970. But he was still much too close to the Marlborough archives, and distracted by the ground noise put out by Sarah Marlborough: nor did he have the professional training and expertise to cope with such a vast subject. Edward Gregg, however, is completely equipped to write the definitive biography, and he has triumphantly succeeded. He has subjected the whole of the Spencer-Churchill papers to a ruthless analysis for the first time, and his use of Sarah's early drafts of the *Conduct* is particularly significant.

He has also searched every other relevant archive, including the Staatsarchiv at Hannover, which he uses to telling effect; he even makes sense of some of Harley's obscure memoranda in the Portland Loan deposit; and he is, of course, on foot with the extensive printed evidence for the period. The result is a complete rehabilitation of the Queen, as well as a new interpretation of several crucial and controversial incidents in her reign. On some of these lost his conclusions are perhaps open to question, but I think his portrait of the Queen, and his assessment of the reign as a whole, will only require supplementation.

But first, a necessary word of caution. The first quarter of the book, up to Anne's accession in 1702, is well below par, and there is a real danger that critical readers will fall away at an early stage (those with a working knowledge of the period could well start at page 130). Gregg argues that Anne's reign was a long and early adulthood is laden, and at times almost perfunctory; his handling of political issues shows none of the grasp which distinguishes his account of her reign, and no great depth of research. Some very old-fashioned notions are trotted out, his attempts at new-fashioned theories are often melodramatic, and there is a light but irritating sprinkling of errors. He is indulgent towards the Marlboroughs—the last thing he can be accused of later—and almost ridiculously critical of William III and Mary II.

Everything is seen through Anne's eyes, with the result that she is always right and everyone else, especially her sister and brother-in-law, wrong. On the rare occasions when William's point of view is put, as on the vexed question of Court mourning for James II in 1701, she is evidently made to appear insufferably petty, childish, ill-informed and immature. This, of course, is the conventional picture of Anne, but it is difficult to reconcile with the picture of an active, intelligent and decisive ruler which fills the rest of the book, and which Gregg convinces us is largely true.

In fact, according to Trevelyan, after the death in 1700 of her last child, the Duke of Gloucester, Anne adopted a much more serious attitude towards her impending responsibilities, and even began to read up some English history. (Gregg has nothing on this.) The

fruits of her reading were soon evident; on her first appearance before Parliament, with her reign three days old, she wore a costume modelled on a portrait of Elizabeth I, and a few weeks later she adopted her famous motto, *Seniorem Eodem*. In November she revived the Elizabethan custom of holding state thanksgiving services at St Paul's for success in war. (Though as early as 1692, having quarrelled with her older sister, she drew a rather hectic parallel between her "sufferings" and those of Princess Elizabeth under Mary I.) At the basis of her political thinking from then on was what Gregg calls "the Elizabethan concept of national unity", and she took her role as war leader with a seriousness that is almost grotesque. (Gregg argues that she remained committed to war for longer than it is now fashionable to think, up to the late autumn of 1703.)

With this went a deep sense of her responsibility towards her people. She chose as the text of her coronation sermon Isaiah 49:23, "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers", and it was as if she released into her public role all the maternal instincts so bitterly frustrated by her inability to bear healthy children. "I have no thought", she said later, "but what is for the good of England. I am sure I have no other, nor never can, but will always to the best of my understanding promote its true interest, and serve my country faithfully, which I look upon to be as much the duty of a sovereign as of the meanest subject." This was a trust imposed on her by God, and though she dismissed the idea of the Divine Right of Kings as more appropriate to the Jacobite branch of the family, she revived the custom of touching for the King's Evil, and approached it with rare emotion and exaltation; in 1714, on her last legs, she alarmed her ministers by insisting on fasting as usual before the ceremony.

She once told the Marlboroughs, "The whole world knows, that there has not been ever upon the throne a person with more virtue and good qualities for the public nor more truly to their interest." And the people reciprocated; her popularity with all classes was fervent and sustained, and no public blame was ever attached to her actions. We know, and her ministers knew, that she could not stay outside or above

politics, but in her public persona she successfully maintained the presence that she did.

The reality was very different. Her honeymoon with the Tories, which in view of their shared views on religion was expected to last the reign, in fact lasted less than twelve months. As soon as they crossed her she moved with majestic self-confidence to remove them: her uncle Rochester, in 1703, and Seymour, Jersey and Nottingham in 1704. At the time this was attributed to the influence of Marlborough and Godolphin, but Gregg shows that she wanted to go further, sooner, and had to be restrained. Henceforward, in remarks, "None of her ministers was ever to underestimate her ability to enforce her strongly held convictions". Her basic political conviction was that to surrender to either the Whigs or the Tories would weaken the authority of the Crown and imperil that national unity on which she set such store. In this context none of her governments was entirely to her liking, which is why the history of her reign is one continuous cabinet reshuffle. The government, which came nearest to meeting her requirements was that projected by Harley in 1708, consisting of himself, Godolphin and Marlborough, supported by a new generation of moderate men from both parties; she blamed him for his premature collapse and found it difficult to forgive him.

Her style of government was established early. Not only did she preside at the Cabinet every Sunday and always have the last word, she was soon receiving foreign envoys and Scots agents without an English minister present, showing a complete grasp of the matter in hand and a willingness to take decisions. She was not above lobbying individuals in parliamentary elections, even Widdie like Bishop Burnet, and she brought her personal influence to bear on the election for Speaker in 1705. The Lord Chief Justice had to remit all death sentences to her, though she was not unduly squeamish about confirming them. Behind a smoke-screen of self-deprecatory verbiage, the ritual presentation of herself as a "poor woman", with poor opinions, she had an elevated conception of her own abilities and entire confidence in her authority. Her assumption of Charles II's habit of attending Lords debates

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commentary

Ladies' night at the Town Hall

By Sandra Salmans

Town Bloody Hall
Everyman Cinema, Hampstead

In the early part of the last decade the US liberation movement teemed, like many pioneers, to engage in publicly staged confrontations with the enemy which usually established nothing more than the bloody-mindedness of one or both sides. One of the better humoured—and more lucrative—clashes occurred on the tennis courts, where Billie Jean King took on and beat an aging male champion who, for the occasion, donned a frilly dress. But probably the most dramatic set-piece occurred in April 1971 when, under the aegis of the Theatre for Ideas, the New York Town Hall held a "dialogue on women's liberation" whose participants included Germaine Greer and male chauvinist par excellence, Norman Mailer. The filmed record of the debate, *Town Bloody Hall* (for which title the producers are indebted to an outburst by Greer), last week opened a two-month film season, "Images of Women", at the Everyman Cinema, Hampstead, that examines the past and present cinematic treatment of women.

The film, like most debates, begins slowly, with each of the four "ladies" (the chairman Mailer describes the women—giving a ten-minute statement, followed by his own question or corollary. At the time of the debate, the most sensational aspect—particularly among those who did not attend—was some rather vigorous preening by one of the panelists, Jill Johnston, a lesbian and free-form poet then published regularly by the *Village Voice*. In a monotone Johnston read a poem that was alternately heard and not heard, and whose outrageousness she, as much as the

audience, seemed amazed. The outrage and amusement grew as two of Johnston's friends and/or lovers stepped on to the stage and ardently tumbled with her in the floor. "Come on, Jill, be a lady!" Mailer belted at the seminude heap. "I want to talk to you about lesbians, goldammit!" Johnston wisely fled the scene, but any illusions of civility had been dispelled and the insults soon began to fly. It had seemed at first that the lines were clearly drawn, with Mailer (author of *The Prisoner of Sex*) on one side and Greer (*The Female Eunuch*) on the



"Master baby" (1886), an oil by Sir William Quiller Orchardson of his wife and their youngest son. It is being shown in an exhibition devoted to George Moore, who in *Modern Paintings* (1893) condemned Orchardson's fashionable theatricality, praised the realism and domestic charm of this canvas, which he regarded as Orchardson's finest. The exhibition includes a number of portraits and other works, including the famous *Voltaire* (1883) and early drawings for it. The twenty-four page illustrated catalogue is obtainable from the gallery's Publications Department, 17 Ainslie Place, Edinburgh, for £1.30 (including postage).

other. But an unexpectedly enthusiastic combatant emerged in Diana Trilling, who had been introduced by Mailer—purly in just, he later insisted to general disbelief—as a "foremost *hula* critic". The film flickers as cameras swing back and forth to capture the battle, but even the jumpiness gives a sense of the quick tempers and caustic wits at play. Trilling, a long-time friend and appreciative reviewer of Mailer, criticizes the women's liberation movement as authoritarian and accuses Greer of insinuating Freud. Greer retorts: the charge, accuses Trilling of misquot-

ing Greer's own book and refers to the audience that members of the group always quote, "encourages Trilling. Mailer, who kept out of a good fight, bright spotlight, resurrected charged that women's liberation—was not so much an offensive, makes a joke at expense.

The audience, which included such movement and media big names as Betty Friedan, Susan S. Elizabeth Hardwick and The New York Times literary critic Anthony, leap joyfully into the fray. Feminists quote his own testimony of machismo back at Mr. II Mailer, as he has written, "with his genitals, one sweetly enquires 'in what of ink does he dip his pen?'". Mailer referred to his penis as "an overgrown" another woman. "The retaliator", Mailer said, "like the same thing. Mailer, another questioner and, when protests, curses her in his own familiar bad-boy style. On the other hand, women squelches on attempt by Margaret to make her look foolish.

Whether any of the most ultimately escapes that fate, ever, could be the subject of another debate. Even at this women's liberationists must recognize that a contrast with Mailer would be built up and a woman humiliating it happened. Mailer's verbal risk proved him against the ship of Greer and some of the King had no real competitors in the audience, just as Mailer King had no real competitors in the tennis courts. If there was intellectual clash, it was between Greer and Trilling—both of whom, with noticeable bitterness, continued the argument square in print.

What the debate did produce, presumably the Town Hall, was a more anticipated, was a theatre—or, in the present case, a cinema. Although the visual qualities of the film are much to be desired, the makers have captured the excitement and tension of the event and the vicarious may there be the audience of one of the great Jacqueline Cabell, who was part of the New York chapter of the National Organization for Women, and admitted to representing "square middle-class". Although she initially had doubts, she finally observed, "I wouldn't miss it for the world."

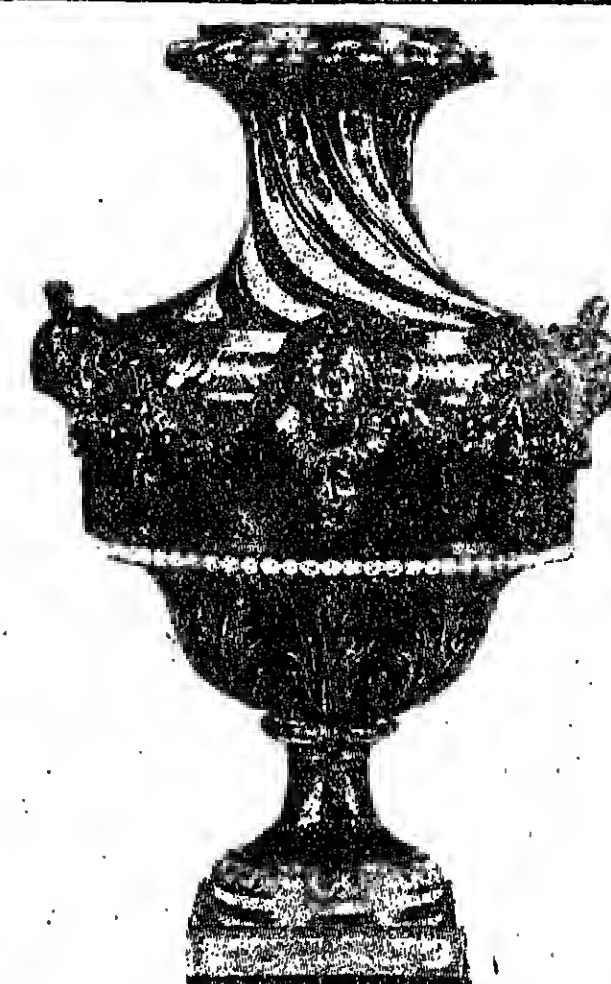
The "Images of Women" is the first of a series of films, the first of which, *Images of Women*, is now continuing with Jane Fonda in *Krute* (April 21-23), and *Images of Women* (April 30), and Ingmar Bergman's *Sonata* (May 14).

Beethoven as if it were pop music. Something registers then, for later, when Garrard thinks himself slaying of a heart attack (it proves to be only the outcome of his "musically strong exercise" with the lonely secretary), he calls on Frank to sing again. Sober, and confronted with a seemingly dying man in the small hours of the morning, Frank has to struggle, but gets out, in Capote, the great pianist from the German doctor arrives, takes it all in and enquires bluntly, "English?"

This is funny, but there is some pathos too in many of these episodes. It is unsettling to see someone with so much power having so little sense of what nukes people like. It is satisfying when the secret put him down, as when the secretary (Prunella Scales in assured vein) answers his question about whether she enjoys her work with a meticulous account of the enjoyment she derives from looking forward to finishing it.

Work has taken over the whole of Garrard's life and the play ends on a dark note: in a final monologue of the movable "almost real" doors, we are presented with a shocking tableau, the figure of Tom slumped on a chair, dead. He has had a real heart attack brought on by his egoism and effort once on the "almost real" one experienced by Garrard. With his going, affect goes also the moral integrity which managed to survive in a world where the leading question is "will it work" and the audience cannot be expected to feel strongly for characters who have been used chiefly, after all, for comic effect, but the comedy has proved more complex by the end than we would have expected it could be at the start. The monster producer has swallowed up a life and the title, with its sardonic variation on the idiom, "Make or break", has been chilling, as well as comically

commentary



Above: one of a pair of dark-blue vases with gilded decoration, c1772-76, from the Sévres exhibition discussed here. Left: a Wedgwood vase and pedestal illustrated in Eliza Metcalf's two-volume *Life of Wedgwood*, published in 1865-66 and now reprinted by the Scolar Press in a sumptuous facsimile celebrating the 250th anniversary of Wedgwood's birth. The 1,000-page book is available at £35, in an edition limited to 1,000 copies, from Gerald, 73-74 Piccadilly, W1.

Porcelain for the Royal slice of bread

By Hugo Morley-Fletcher

Sèvres Porcelain from the Royal
Collection
Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace

Of the great porcelain factories, Sévres is conspicuously lacking in literature. Even in France, where it all happened, only one monograph, *Porcelaine de Sévres* by Pierre Verlet, has appeared since the war, and unfortunately that came out at a time when the means of producing copiously illustrated books were limited and expensive.

So it merely laid the groundwork for further study. There has ever been a monograph in English, although for a variety of reasons, much of the finest production of the factory is housed in Britain. One of these reasons was George IV who, as Prince Regent, was on

avid collector of Sévres ware. In 1815 youth he bought directly from the factory and in increasing quantities. Sévres was only halted by the Revolution, which at once greatly reduced the factory's native clientele and seriously interrupted its production. During the troubles that ensued, George was able to acquire many pieces that had formed part of the French royal collections, and much of what he thus accumulated has remained together to this day. The Queen's collection therefore represents an astonishing document of at least one man's taste in Sévres in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

The implications of the fact that it was a royal taste, requiring splendour and rich colours for display, are explained by Geoffrey de Bellaigue in his introduction to the catalogue of the current exhibition at the Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace. Sévres Porcelain from the Royal Collection. Royal Sévres, as commissioned by and supplied to Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, to Catherine the Great and George IV himself, is not everybody's taste. Modern collectors and students tend to regard the pieces as brash and over-ornate, and to prefer the less highly decorated surfaces and uncomplicated shapes which had characterized Sévres in the third decade of the eighteenth century. George IV, actually owned one or two pieces of this type, including a major chinaware group. It was apparently too simple for him; and was "improved" at the time it was acquired by an ornate clockcase and perhaps some gilding. Geoffrey de Bellaigue wisely discards it for the purposes of the exhibition.

It is no fault of de Bellaigue, therefore, that the material the exhibition covers is both overwhelming and limited. The lucid and informative catalogue goes a long way towards reducing these problems, but though it paints a very useful, detailed picture, it can only depict such pieces as are in the collection. The same limitations do not apply to a major new monograph.

In *Sèvres des Origines à nos jours* (Office du Livre, 1979), Tamara Pré-

aud and Maurice Brunet have divided the study of the porcelain of Sévres into two halves, before and after 1800. This enormous task is fundamentally a pictorial record of a large part of the production of the factory in the past 200 years. The information is presented dispassionately, recording in great detail the original names (culled from the factory records) for each piece. The attention to detail is meticulous, providing a splendid instrument to use and consult. Should you want to know whether Sévres made a particular model, and if it did, what it was called and when it was made, the book will tell you.

What it does not do, unfortunately, is express any comment on the underlying taste. There is no discussion of what the factory set out to achieve, why it did so and whether these goals were reached. Little or no judgment is passed on how the porcelain of Sévres compares up to achievements elsewhere and it is hard to discover how the authors themselves really regard the porcelain they are discussing.

A critical study is still needed, then, but the authors have done much to do it, and positively. The re-evaluation of Sévres with original names on factory lists is a major contribution, as is the almost exhaustive corpus of illustrations. Most important of all, the study of what happened in the eighteenth century and in the present century breaks entirely new ground. To many, great porcelain at Sévres disappeared with Napoleon's empire. In fact all sorts of things were made through the nineteenth century and these had until now never been properly researched. Now at last the work has begun. It is not an exhaustive study of the subject, but Tamara Préaud has produced a basic scaffolding around which future research can be developed.

The May programme at the Riverside Studios, Hammersmith, includes a season of films by Joseph H. Lewis from May 1 to 3, *The Gong of Mine* (1940), *The Falcon in San Francisco* (1946) and *Gun Crazy* (1949). Peter Gilg's production of *Julius Caesar* opens at the Studios on May 21 (previews earlier).

Geddit?

By Jeremy Treglown

As You Like It
Royal Shakespeare Theatre

"No matter how it be in time", Jacques tells the foresters he wants to sing to him, "as it make noise enough", and it seems as if Terry Hands has given comparable advice to everyone involved in the latest Stratford-upon-Avon Rep. rather than the RSC—or so it seems by contrast with Trevor Nunn's endlessly subtle 1977 production of the same house. Oddy, though, Hands's *As You* is so far removed from Nunn's that a comparison (no more favourable to Hands) it evokes as strongly as with Nunn's excellent *Three Sisters*, currently revived at the Warehouse in Covent Garden.

It may simply be that both productions use the same smoke-effect: plausibly and effectively for the first at the beginning of the third act of *Three Sisters*; ludicrously and exaggeratedly for a winter mist in *As You Like It*. But there are other resemblances between the plays, brought into focus in the single incontestably good moment in this *As You* when Susan Fleetwood's Rosalind/Ganymede says to Pheobe, with the warm deliberateness which makes Fleetwood, though very rarely in this production, such a compelling actress, "Look upon him. Love him. He worships you."

Like Chekhov, the young Shakespeare was fascinated by the comicality of romantic mismatching, of people being in love with people who, for one reason or another, they cannot have, rather than with those they have already got. None of Shakespeare's comedies ends with the desolation of *Three Sisters*, but there is usually somebody left behind: not only Malvolio, but the Prince of Denmark, for example, and poor William in *As You Like It*. It is not difficult to make these moments complicatedly touching as well as funny (or grim)—though it is hard to do so as well as in Nunn's *Three Sisters*, or as badly as in Hands's *As You*. This production ends with a bewilderingly klutched version of what has become the standard Stratford ending for the romantic comedies: a big rustic festival, with exuberant and solemn, with music and dancing and a tableau on a garlanded cart. Ferrish's designs are hideous and unhelpful, though it is not surprising that Duke Senior can put up with being exiled from the court, with his floor raised up to the level of the forest whose main plant is a trailing, habit-vermicelli, clustering densely below the higher branches of the trees.

Generally Hands's trouble seems to be that he doesn't trust the play. The actors have been encouraged to roar, with laughter of each other's jokes, for example, presumably in case nobody else does. When Celia wanders moaningly, Rosalind helps foreigners and deaf members of the audience by miming ferociously. And Oliver, Duke Frederick and Le Beau all act as hard as if they were appearing in an open-air version of *Juneteenth* on Dover cliffs, being judged by French people watching through binoculars from Calais.

In all this, there is one performance of almost unnerving calm and self-confidence. Joe Melia, as Touchstone, gets on splendidly, earning his name, as if he had never heard of Terry Hands. He's best with the huge William, looking at him and then away from him as if this giant (and indeed the whole production) were a bad, though quite funny, joke. He's also good as the young man who, having stepped in some Arden-forest sheep-dung and wiped his shoe with one of Orlando's poems, he takes the poem up, accusing the poet of being a "clown" over the front-row, as if he were giving out a limited supply of rare rose-petals. It may not sound very funny, but at the time one was fully grateful for it.

Oxford
University Press

On Justice

J. R. Lucas

The aim of this book is to give a single coherent account of the concept of justice and to show why justice is important. Justice enables the individual to accept the decisions of society and to be identified with them, even though contrary to his wishes or his interests. The theory of games is used to reveal the rationale of justice, and to distinguish the theory developed in this book from those given by the utilitarians and by John Rawls. Illustrated £10

The Imposition
of MethodA Study of Descartes
and Locke

Peter A. Schouls

The author here argues that Descartes and Locke took up a fundamentally similar methodological stance when they approached any subject matter of which they believed they could obtain knowledge. The nature of this methodology is made clear from Descartes' *Regulae* and *Discourse* as well as from Locke's *Essay*, and its application is illustrated in geometry and metaphysics, political theory and theology. £13

A History of Russian
Thought from the
Enlightenment to
Marxism

Andrzej Walicki

Translated by

Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka

This comprehensive handbook, by one of the leading scholars of Russian thought, will prove indispensable to students of political theory and Russian culture. £12.50

The Middle East

A Political and Economic
Survey

Peter Mansfield

This is a new and completely revised edition of Peter Mansfield's survey of the Middle East. It contains a detailed analysis of the role of oil in the world economy and in international diplomacy, and is thoroughly up to date in every way. It will be indispensable to anyone with an interest in an area whose political and economic evolution may decide the fate of the world. Fifth edition £10.50

United Nations
Peacekeeping
1946-1967Documents
and Commentary
Volume III: Africa
Rosalyn Higgins

This is the third of four volumes in which all UN forces and military observer groups are studied. It is devoted entirely to the UN operation in the Congo. The final volume in the series will cover the observer groups in Cyprus. £30

Dating the decline

By T. C. Barker

NEIL K. BUXTON and DEREK M. ALDRICHT (Editors)

British Industry between the Wars
Instability and Industrial Development,
1919-1939
Oxford, Oxford Press, £18.00
0 19 067 383 9

The lively and growing debate which is now taking place about the decline and, in some cases, fall of whole sectors of British industry gives our recent industrial past an immediate relevance. Much of the discussion occurs among economists (with Milton Friedman usually present either in person or on paper) and frequently appeals to historical evidence. Are our present troubles the result of mistakes made in the Second World War, or do they have earlier origins? Or are they more fundamental but previously concealed by the advantages of plentiful coal and iron and an early start? Did the First World War deal a stunning blow in the world's greatest trading nation from which it had not fully recovered when 1939-45 hit it hard again?

There are now a few good company histories which begin to answer questions such as these but no single volume which looks at the performance of particular industries during the inter-war period. In the present volume ten economic historians attempt this formidable task. It is a successor to *The Development of British Industries and Foreign Competition 1875-1914*, published in 1968 and also edited by Derek Aldrich, though with a completely different set of contributors.

Economic historians, concentrating on output and productivity, have for some time taken a more favourable view of the 1920s and, especially, of the 1930s than did earlier writers, whose main concern was the high level of unemployment, which in shipbuilding at one time reached a staggering two-thirds of the entire labour force. Other longer-established industrial giants such as coal-mining and cotton manufacturing also contributed to the dole queues by shedding labour; but as a result they gained in output per head and increased their competitiveness. The difficulty was that the First World War had so disrupted world trading arrangements that, after a brief burst to make good wartime losses, the old markets for this type of export were greatly diminished. The international slump of the early 1930s, itself arguably a product of this new post-war climate of economic gloom, made matters much worse, at least for a time. To retreat and rearmament among the most difficult manoeuvres, especially when there are no reserves, positions to fall back on when the bullets are finally being shot. Nevertheless the capitalists of the industries concerned emerged in these pages with rather more credit than they have received elsewhere.

In shipbuilding, J. R. Parkinson shows the United Kingdom missed out on, on average, a third of the tonnage launched in the world during these difficult years (it was 50 per cent and over in five of the seven years between 1924 and 1930). According to him, the industry was equipped well to the increased demand for motorships and tankers and was "available in virtually unlimited numbers" to the world. The leaders, Parkinson believes, "were not the men who believed in the virtues of being brought up to the construction of ships in the old way of learning by doing... but men who had been brought up to the shipyard, not for many of the reasons of maintenance, so far as the day-to-day running of the yards was concerned, were devoted upon the line to the squad system of working; and, paradoxically, it was this very conservatism of everyone in the industry which saved it in the 1930s, for if it had been more capital intensive at that time, it would probably not have survived. The wonder," Parkinson concludes, "is that it survived at all."

Neil Buxton, who contributes the chapter on coal, another industry whose employers have not been

the rescue of their reputations. The coalminers were underground, of course, and then of course haulage is explained in terms of the more level coal seams in Britain; and coal-mining machinery was installed in those coalfields, like the North-East, where the geology justified it, but not in others, mainly in South Wales, where it did not, and where the higher costs could be recouped from the better prices fetched by the higher calorific content.

There may have been room for limited improvement of the sort that was being placed abroad, but in general, given the decline in demand, there was "little that the British coal trade could have done to ameliorate the position".

Life was much easier for manufacturers in industries such as electrical engineering and, particularly, aircraft, who were supplying new products to expanding markets. Here output grew more rapidly, but in his introduction Buxton takes issue with H. W. Richardson's view that this structural shift was big enough to exert a significant effect on economic recovery in the 1930s, for these so-called "new" industries, he believes, were still too small a part of the whole economy. One of them, indeed—air-

craft manufacturing, about which Peter Fearon writes informatively—was not even important enough to appear in his own right in the census of production in 1939, and had to await government orders in the mid-1930s before it grew at all rapidly.

The book as a whole, however, does bring out clearly that the remarkably good performance of vehicle manufacturers by the mid-1930s, employing just over 100,000 in component manufacture and assembly and yet apparently managing to double its output per head between 1921 and 1935, was far from being typical of the "new" industries as a whole.

Here there is an outstanding contribution by Michael Miller and Roy Church, which underlines the point, already made by Professor Church in his recent book, on Herbert Austin, that sales of cars in the first half of the 1920s, by 11 per cent, despite a fall in the real average value of cars of about a quarter, whereas between 1932 and 1937 such sales fell by only 8 per cent. More people were then spending their rising real earnings on the new generation of small cars. From

1929 Britain took over from France as Europe's major motor vehicle producer. In the boom year of 1937, only 6 per cent of the total number of cars sold in the United Kingdom were imported. How different from today!

This book is a courageous and commendable first shot at what is at present an impossible task, for the basic research has not yet been done. Most of the writers inevitably lean heavily on the censuses of production taken in 1921, 1929 and 1935, but without heed to the warnings about their statistical weaknesses stressed by the *Statistical Review of the United Kingdom*, 1918-1939. Nor does Buxton in his editorial introduction make much attempt to pull together the main points emerging from the subsequent studies, explain why no writings published after 1975 are cited anywhere, or why important industries have been omitted, or touch on the difficulties confronting his contributors.

The "industries" written about here are really umbrella names, often covering a host of quite separately defined branches of manufacture. J. H. Porter has been set an impossible task in dealing

with the whole of cotton and textiles in a mere twenty pages; he can do little more than publish a helpful graph and six tables on comment on them. (By contrast, Harrop, writing about rayon, a relatively easy assignment, R. E. Carr-Saunders's chapter on electrical engineering has not only dealt with the large end of the business and with cable machinery but also with radio and electrical appliances of all sorts, thus deserving of chapters on their own.) T. H. Connolly's responsibility for the whole range of mechanical engineering—pure motor, mechanical and agricultural machinery, marine engines, equipment for the food and drink trade, etc.—though it entitles him to cover this enormous field with considerable authority, W. J. Reader, with two volumes of ICI behind him, has the rayon industry at his fingertips; it is relatively simple for him to bring out the main developments and forget the rest.

Yet, for all its obvious and inevitable shortcomings, this book provides new and significant insights into manufacturing performance between the wars. Above all, it brings out the need for research in this area.

commercial men continued to insist. In Oudh, the change of policy was sharper: in the brief period of British rule before the Mutiny, great men were harshly treated after the Mutiny they were turned into a group of nobles. The British also tried to turn them into improving landlords and justicers in the peace. But few of them felt any enthusiasm for judicial activities after the Western style, and they were with bureaucratic forms and subject to the supercilious criticisms of British officials. Nor did the officials seem to have been well qualified to offer advice on agricultural improvements: their technological suggestions were often inappropriate and sometimes disastrous.

But at least the officials were adaptable. After the Mutiny they were prompt enough to hail as the natural leaders of Indian society those whom they had previously despised as robber barons. Philosophically-minded officials such as W. H. Murray Butler wrote enthusiastically on integrated Hindu society, headed by Brahmins who had renounced power to *raj* and received reverence in return—an idealistic myth which has recently deluded philosophically-minded sociologists. Surely it

was in the interests of British power to prop up the Indian social hierarchy. It was not, however, a long-term interest of the British. They were not to protect luxury and often in ennobling a perceptive observer commented that some of them might have been straight out of the pages of Rudyard Kipling or Kipling-Bobbing. Butler's contact with the Indian nobility was often in the nature of a *patronage*. When the crunch came, they did nothing to effect the British in their loyalty.

However, the officials who acted the new policy were not of their generation. Such views were of the past. Butler's view of the nobility and Butler's view of the nobility were of the past. Butler's view of the nobility and Butler's view of the nobility were of the past.

Students of the history of ideas have commonly supposed that the idea of natural rights was developed from that of natural law in the seventeenth century by Grotius, Pufendorf, and Locke. In these views, and especially in Locke, the first two admit a *et cetera* sense of the notion "right", a natural right is a claim afforded by nature; it corresponds to a natural obligation which other people have to meet the claim. Pufendorf's concept of natural rights which is inherited by the eighteenth-century declarations of the rights of man and by the twentieth-century notion of universal moral claims, looked to universal moral obligations.

But (continuing the common opinion of scholars until recently) the seventeenth century also saw a different, *et cetera* sense of natural right in the political theory of Hobbes, followed by Spinoza. This concept of natural right was, in the eyes of its edicts, thoroughly immoral. It was the right to self-preservation, as you pleased in the absence of nature, that is, in the absence of organized society ruled by positive law. Far from being a claim to obligation, said Hobbes, it was a claim to freedom from obligation. If a man has a right to do something, the expression means that there is nothing which he is obliged to do; he is at liberty to do or to forbear.

Hobbes could describe a right in this way because the term had, as he said, no sense, and that is the reason why Grotius and Locke, who were both of the eighteenth century, had to give it a new sense. Hobbes' concept of natural right was, in the eyes of its edicts, thoroughly immoral. It was the right to self-preservation, as you pleased in the absence of nature, that is, in the absence of organized society ruled by positive law. Far from being a claim to obligation, said Hobbes, it was a claim to freedom from obligation. If a man has a right to do something, the expression means that there is nothing which he is obliged to do; he is at liberty to do or to forbear.

PHILOSOPHY

Clouds of not knowing

By Anthony Kenny

STANLEY CAVELL:
The Claims of Reason: Moral Theory and Modern Philosophy, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy
Slipcase, Oxford University Press, £12.50
0 19 502571 7

Admirers of Wittgenstein's later writings are rarely successful in presenting his philosophy in a manner attractive to the general reader.

Some report his teaching in a dramatic and oracular style which is at once disowned as a falsification by professional philosophers; others offer an academically inapproachable commentary which fails to arrest the attention of the non-scholarly reader. This state of affairs was, in a manner, foreseen by Wittgenstein himself, who wrote in his philosophical diary: "A common sense person, when he reads earlier philosophers thinks—quite rightly—'Sheer nonsense.' When he listens to me he thinks—rightly again—'Nothing but stale truisms.' Thus has the image of philosophy changed." It does, after all, call for

unusual gifts to dramatize the philosophy of a man who thought that the task of philosophy was to assemble reminders of the obvious. Stanley Cavell, whose book *The Claims of Reason* is in great part a meditation on the *Philosophical Investigations*, possesses the rare ability to present Wittgenstein's thought in a manner that is philosophically accurate while making an immediate imaginative impact. He concentrates in this book on one principal strand of the *Investigations* which he describes as a view of

the truth of scepticism, or what I might call the moral of scepticism, namely, that the human creature's basis in the world as a whole, its relation to the world as a whole, is not that of knowing. This is both arresting and accurate: it is really a positive right, against the moral of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, a work no one has ever accused of consisting only of stale truisms.

The Claims of Reason contains many passages of sensitive commentary on texts from the *Philosophical Investigations*. Cavell's readings of Wittgenstein are invariably effective, usually imaginatively convincing, and commonly convincing. Because of the way in which he views the

rights of action and rights of reciprocity ("my own invention", but earlier than Richard Tuck's support), active rights and passive rights. Dr Tuck claims that these pairs of names, and I shall follow him in using them. Some philosophers have argued that all rights are passive rights because a so-called active right, a right to act, is really a passive right, against others to be left free to act. Others have argued, on the contrary, that no rights are passive; rights which are claims against others must include a legitimate power for the right-holder to require those others to fulfil their obligation.

The historical picture, as outlined above, has been a modified in recent years when it was shown, notably by Quentin Skinner, that Hobbes was less of an innovator than had been supposed. Hobbes derived some of his leading doctrines from other thinkers of his time, and place. Now Tuck's admirable book brings further discoveries, some quite surprising.

He shows first that the seventeenth-century flowering of natural rights theory had a medieval predecessor which continued into the period of the Renaissance. What is more, the earlier inheritance, as he later shows, is put forward as a theory of active rights, others a theory of passive rights. Tuck traces the development of these views from concepts of *actio* and *passio*, explaining how different ideas of natural rights were properly understood as counterpoint patterns of change. Among other things he brings out the interesting fact that the concept of a passive right, of a claim against others, emerged most clearly in Canon Law. His emphasis on the duty of charity.

By "theory" here Tuck seems to mean a conceptual framework with a practical function. He does not mean what a scientist or philosopher means by a theory, an account with an explanatory function. He himself is putting forward a philosophical theory, but he should find another word for the thing he is talking about.

This is not to suggest that philosophy has only an explanatory function. Let us turn to Tuck's conviction that many of the problems of moral and political philosophy can be solved historically. His own historical inquiry has certainly thrown light on the philosophical problem about active and passive rights, but it cannot solve the problem because the options are to some extent options for choice. Tuck shows us how and why people have come to think of active rights and of passive rights. The philosophical dispute, however, is not simply one of what people do mean (have meant); it is also one of what we should do in the future, and that decision cannot be taken for us by past history.

A book which gives important new insights into natural rights theory stimulates philosophical reflection in a clearly a valuable contribution to intellectual history. The first part, showing the development from Roman law to the late medieval concept of natural rights, is especially absorbing, despite one or two lapses in the translation or transcription of Latin. Tuck's frequent use of "famously" is irritating; his historical sense should have prevented him from saying that "famously" when he means "famously" when he means "famously".

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philosopher's overarching enterprise, he can release his philosophical concerns to the wider history of the republic of letters. Thus a book which begins with a linguistic analysis of the notion of criticism ends with a literary exploration of the blindness of Othello.

Cavell can write well; many a page contains an epigram which sums up an important philosophical insight. Here are some instances. The intellectual environment of the *Philosophical Investigations*, he observes, consists of the ideologies of Verificationism, Operationalism, and Logical Behaviourism. He goes on:

A way of stating Wittgenstein's originality is to say that, while his teaching absorbs these tendencies, it adopts none; as one might say, it takes them.

On the face of it, this distinction, he has this to say:

Statements of fact and judgments of value rest upon the same copolices of human nature... only a creature that can judge of value can state a fact.

He has an Austrian gift for noticing significant nuances of idiom.

We speak of someone as in pain, but not as in pleasure; and we can cause pain, but not pleasure,

which is given and taken, like pride and courage, but unlike happiness, which can only be found.

Despite Cavell's philosophical and literary gifts his book is in some ways a mishapen, undisciplined amalgam of ill-assorted parts. About half of it is lifted, without substantial attempt at updating, from a doctoral dissertation submitted to Harvard in 1961 under the title *The Claims to Rationality*. The first part of the present work, "Wittgenstein and the Concept of Human Knowledge", consists of fragments of the original thesis scattered among a hundred pages dating from 1970-71. The present Parts Two and Three constitute the concluding two thirds of the Harvard dissertation. Part Two sets Wittgenstein's work in the context of the quest of traditional epistemology.

Part Three, entitled "Knowledge and the Basis of Morality", is disappointingly thin, consisting essentially of review essays of C. L. Stevenson's *Ethics and Language*, of A. N. Prior's early work *Logic and the Basis of Ethics*, and of a preliminary paper of John Rawls. The final part, "Skepticism and the Problem of Othello", written between 1974 and 1977, is a postscript, unstructured and wide-ranging meditation on topics connected with the private-language argument.

All this amounts to a book with a period flavour, or rather the flavour of a number of periods. It does not matter much that Cavell has ignored the mass of writing about Wittgenstein since 1961; he may well claim that he understands Wittgenstein better than most of those who have written in the intervening years, so that there is no reason why he should waste time comparing his ideas with theirs. What is less easy to forgive is his refusal to have any truck with the more recently published posthumous *Investigations* which he writes in criticism of the *Tractatus*, which is not so much wrong as empty, both because to know what constitutes an ethical statement is to know what constitutes a philosophy, and because it is more to the present point to see how the *Investigations* is written in criticism of itself; then where and how are we to approach this text?

This rambling sentence, elbowing its way through a jostling crowd of unnecessary qualifications and intriguing irrelevances which it has itself called up, provides a fitting paradigm characteristic of the self-indulgent structure of the book as a whole. The exasperated reader might well put the book down and go no farther; surely, he may well think, no sentence needs to be 200 words long. He would be right; but it would be a pity if he stopped there, because he would miss some really excellent things.

Blasphemy, however, he goes in for philosophical subtlety himself. His book is a piece of history but it has a philosophical purpose. He tells us that it "began as an attempt to solve" some modern philosophical problems about rights. He had "the conviction that these problems, like much in the area of moral and political philosophy, could be solved historically, by an investigation of how the relevant language had developed". But, he concluded, the relevant language should not be examined in isolation; it needs to be seen in the context of the "theory" which the language is actually putting the word or concept to use.

By "theory" here Tuck seems to mean a conceptual framework with a practical function. He does not mean what a scientist or philosopher means by a theory, an account with an explanatory function. He himself is putting forward a philosophical theory, but he should find another word for the thing he is talking about.

This is not to suggest that philosophy has only an explanatory function. Let us turn to Tuck's conviction that many of the problems of moral and political philosophy can be solved historically. His own historical inquiry has certainly thrown light on the philosophical problem about active and passive rights, but it cannot solve the problem because the options are to some extent options for choice. Tuck shows us how and why people have come to think of active rights and of passive rights. The philosophical dispute, however, is not simply one of what people do mean (have meant); it is also one of what we should do in the future, and that decision cannot be taken for us by past history.

A book which gives important new insights into natural rights theory stimulates philosophical reflection in a clearly a valuable contribution to intellectual history. The first part, showing the development from Roman law to the late medieval concept of natural rights, is especially absorbing, despite one or two lapses in the translation or transcription of Latin. Tuck's frequent use of "famously" is irritating; his historical sense should have prevented him from saying that "famously" when he means "famously" when he means "famously".

philosophy of a man who thought that the task of philosophy was to assemble reminders of the obvious. Stanley Cavell, whose book *The Claims of Reason* is in great part a meditation on the *Philosophical Investigations*, possesses the rare ability to present Wittgenstein's thought in a manner that is philosophically accurate while making an immediate imaginative impact. He concentrates in this book on one principal strand of the *Investigations* which he describes as a view of

the truth of scepticism, or what I might call the moral of scepticism, namely, that the human creature's basis in the world as a whole, its relation to the world as a whole, is not that of knowing. This is both arresting and accurate: it is really a positive right, against the moral of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, a work no one has ever accused of consisting only of stale truisms.

The Claims of Reason contains many passages of sensitive commentary on texts from the *Philosophical Investigations*. Cavell's readings of Wittgenstein are invariably effective, usually imaginatively convincing, and commonly convincing. Because of the way in which he views the

rights of action and rights of reciprocity ("my own invention", but earlier than Richard Tuck's support), active rights and passive rights. Dr Tuck claims that these pairs of names, and I shall follow him in using them. Some philosophers have argued that all rights are passive rights because a so-called active right, a right to act, is really a passive right, against others to be left free to act. Others have argued, on the contrary, that no rights are passive; rights which are claims against others must include a legitimate power for the right-holder to require those others to fulfil their obligation.

The historical picture, as outlined above, has been a modified in recent years when it was shown, notably by Quentin Skinner, that Hobbes was less of an innovator than had been supposed. Hobbes derived some of his leading doctrines from other thinkers of his time, and place. Now Tuck's admirable book brings further discoveries, some quite surprising.

He shows first that the seventeenth-century flowering of natural rights theory had a medieval predecessor which continued into the period of the Renaissance. What is more, the earlier inheritance, as he later shows, is put forward as a theory of active rights, others a theory of passive rights. Tuck traces the development of these views from concepts of *actio* and *passio*, explaining how different ideas of natural rights were properly understood as counterpoint patterns of change. Among other things he brings out the interesting fact that the concept of a passive right, of a claim against others, emerged most clearly in Canon Law. His emphasis on the duty of charity.

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about Wittgenstein's own incompleteness but a ministerial exploration of that problem in his final work, *On Certainty*.

The Claims of Reason is a worthwhile book, but it could have been much better had it been printed of dead wood and over-exuberant foliage. The need for trimming can be illustrated by the very first sentence.

If not at the beginning of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, since what swarms philosophy is no more to be known at the outset than how to make an end of it; and if not at the opening of *Philosophical Investigations*, since its opening is not to be confused with the starting of the philosophy it expresses, and since the terms in which their opening might be understood can hardly be given along with the opening itself; and if we are to understand it, we must not look to our history, since placing this book historically can hardly happen earlier than placing it philosophically; nor look to Wittgenstein's past, since then we are likely to suppose that the *Investigations* is written in criticism of the *Tractatus*, which is not so much wrong as empty, both because to know what constitutes an ethical statement is to know what constitutes a philosophy, and because it is more to the present point to see how the *Investigations* is written in criticism of itself; then where and how are we to approach this text?

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Choosing to live alone

By Patricia Craig

JOAN BARFOOT:
Gaining Ground
199pp. The Women's Press Ltd.
£2.50
0 7013 38521

"Independence I have long considered the grand blessing of life, far beyond of every virtue; and independence I will ever secure by contracting my wants, though I were to live on a barren heath," wrote Mary Wollstonecraft. For women in recent fiction, independence usually means recovery of the self, usually in accordance with certain wishes of their own, acknowledged perhaps after years of dissembling. It will not exclude ideas of compromise and rearrangement; few will opt for solitude and the barren heath.

Joan Barfoot's heroine is an exception. Abba Phillips, evasively played as far as anyone can tell, is a neurotic, overbearing, and intelligent; she is intelligent, intelligent children; large house; dogs, choosers, without obvious invitation, to cut herself off from all the social props supposed to enrich a woman's daily existence. She leaves her plush Toronto home, and, with money inherited from her grandmother, buys a stone-built cabin in a wilderness.

Abba's first and most crucial gain is literally ground—several acres of it, to be walked over, savoured, cultivated, seasoned for forage. What she feels is akin to the exhilaration of Sylvia Plath when she wrote "This is my property. Two times a day I paco it, sniffing... but fiercer and more austere; a kind of backwoods pioneering spirit has surfaced in Abba, making her past routine seem hazy and remote. An unsuitable departure for a woman? The life of a recluse has always been considered a valid temptation for a man, properly appealing to some romantic strain in the muscle-line temperament, whereas the

woman living alone in the middle of nowhere is typically a witch or an outcast—at any rate, an oddity. Abba strongly repudiates the idea that she may be mad; what has overtaken her is not a "breakdown" but its opposite, a "break-up." Chopping wood or uprooting weeds from the vegetable plot, she experiences only a sensation of delight. The novel succeeds in communicating the charms of solitary living (sitting in front of a log fire, wrapped in a patchwork quilt), though it doesn't fail to stress the powers of endurance required to carry it through.

For nine years Abba lives undisturbed, then one day her daughter Katie, now eighteen, appears. It is a moment of confusion for the mother, caught with her hands raised in bewilderment and slow to react as she tries to understand the new girl. But the meeting sparks off a succession of memories which uncovers the pattern of past events. An ordinary life, it seems to have been, with only rare incidents of moral unease. At her wedding, for example: "I was—I was not myself." Her attachment to her first baby is obsessive, to be sure, but this is a usual failing in young wives. Running a house, keeping things going—these are universal obligations, unbroken, as a rule, without obtrusive damage to the psyche. Husband, children—I swear I loved them all," says Abba. "And then I left." There is no easy explanation.

Joan Barfoot has resisted the impulse to turn all the small disasters, the wrongs and burdens and humiliations of home life, into a comedy of bad manners or forgivable errors. To document recovery of spirits, to indicate the resources available to wordy and ironic wives, is the business of many clever, entertaining novelists. Barfoot's purpose is more serious and radical; she is questioning assumptions about sanity and "proper" behaviour. There is, indeed, only one moment of humour in the book, and it occurs towards the end, when Abba succumbs in a sudden, brief panic, envisaging the effect of her appearance upon an

outsider. "My God, I must put myself together, straighten my hair, put on new clothes, I can't let people see me this way," she thinks. It's a temporary reversal. Mirrors and clocks—those symbolic objects—have long been excluded from the premises. She has contracted her wants, with a vengeance.

The problem involved in creating sympathy for an absconding mother (a figure in romantic fiction no less common; think of the founding; and character demanding serious treatment) since the door of the doll's house was closed behind her, has always been the children. They are a responsibility not to be relinquished lightly. Not that Abba does anything lightly. Not a part of her nature, it is just that the enormity of her action never seems to strike her. The children suffer, yes, and that is to be regretted, but it is happening somewhere on another plane, distant as an astrologically reported on television. "I am guilty," Abba states; but we feel this is less a plea for understanding than an assertion of autonomy. For the sane reason she will not admit that her husband is implicated in her departure; and perhaps as a consequence, he remains an ill-defined figure.

It is Abba's story, and this is the way she chooses to tell it. "Yes, of course I made him up," she says about her husband. "I deliberately made him into nothing." It is a basic psychological trick, and also a cleverly—part of the narrative design. No point of view but Abba's can carry weight. The book requires a moral centre, of course, to balance conventional feelings attaching to the image of the negligent mother, and it has one; in place of sacrifice is a new morality founded on the old morality of the novel, incidentally opposed to posturing and role-playing. This is a gain in feminist terms. Abba's retreat signifies a private advance. It is an advance in the wider sense, too, representing progress, time for reassessment and reevaluation; but Gaining Ground is above all a novel about personal integrity.

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